



**DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE**

**BILLING CODE 3510-12**

**National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration**

**Proposed Information Collection; Comment Request; Conflict of Interest Disclosure for Non-Federal Government Individuals Who are Candidates to Conduct Peer Reviews Required by the OMB Peer Review Bulletin**

**AGENCY:** National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), Commerce.

**ACTION:** Notice.

**SUMMARY:** The Department of Commerce, as part of its continuing effort to reduce paperwork and respondent burden, invites the general public and other Federal agencies to comment on proposed and/or continuing information collections, as required by the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995.

**DATES:** To ensure consideration, written or on-line comments must be submitted on or before (insert date 60 days after date of publication in the FEDERAL REGISTER).

**ADDRESSES:** Direct all written comments to Adrienne Thomas, PRA Officer, NOAA, 151 Patton Avenue, Room 159, Asheville, NC 28801 (or via the Internet at [PRAComments@doc.gov](mailto:PRAComments@doc.gov)). All comments received are part of the public record. Comments will generally be posted without change. All Personally Identifiable Information (for example, name and address) voluntarily submitted by the commenter may be publicly accessible. Do not submit Confidential Business Information or otherwise sensitive or protected information.

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:** Requests for additional information or copies of the information collection instrument and instructions should be directed to Jeffrey Dillen,

NOAA OGC, 14<sup>th</sup> & Constitution Avenue NW, Herbert C Hoover Bldg., Rm 78032,  
Washington, DC 20230-0001, Jeff.dillen@noaa.gov or by telephone at (301) 713-7382.

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:**

*I. Abstract*

This request is for extension of a currently approved collection.

The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) issued government-wide guidance to enhance the practice of peer review of government science documents. OMB's Final Information Quality Bulletin for Peer Review ("Peer Review Bulletin" or PRB) (available at [https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/omb/memoranda\\_fy2005\\_m05-03/](https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/omb/memoranda_fy2005_m05-03/)) establishes minimum peer review standards for influential scientific information that Federal agencies intend to disseminate.

The Peer Review Bulletin also directs Federal agencies to adopt or adapt the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) policy for evaluating conflicts of interest when selecting peer reviewers who are not Federal government employees (federal employees are subject to Federal ethics requirements). For peer review purposes, the term "conflicts of interest" means any financial or other interest which conflicts with the service of the individual because it could: (1) significantly impair the individual's objectivity; or (2) create an unfair competitive advantage for any person or organization. NOAA has adapted the NAS policy and developed two confidential conflict disclosure forms which the agency will use to examine prospective reviewers' potential financial conflicts and other interests that could impair objectivity or create an unfair advantage. One form is for peer reviewers of studies related to government regulation and the other form is for all other influential scientific information subject to the Peer Review Bulletin. In addition,

the latter form has been adapted by NOAA's Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research for potential reviewers of scientific laboratories.

The forms include questions about employment as well as investment and property interests and research funding. Both forms also require the submission of curriculum vitae. NOAA is seeking to collect this information from potential peer reviewers who are not government employees when conducting a peer review pursuant to the PRB. The information collected in the conflict of interest disclosure is essential to NOAA's compliance with the OMB PRB, and helps to ensure that government studies are reviewed by independent, impartial peer reviewers.

## *II. Method of Collection*

Forms may be downloaded from the Internet and are fillable and signed electronically or manually. They may be submitted, along with the Curriculum Vitae, via e-mail or regular mail.

## *III. Data*

*OMB Control Number:* 0648-0567.

*Form Number(s):* None.

*Type of Review:* Regular submission (extension of a current information collection).

*Affected Public:* Individuals or households.

*Estimated Number of Respondents:* 321

*Estimated Time Per Response:* 30 minutes each: Conflict of Interest Disclosure for General Scientific and Technical Studies and Assistance; and Conflict of Interest Disclosure for Studies Related to Government Regulation.

*Estimated Total Annual Burden Hours:* 161 hours.

*Estimated Total Annual Cost to Public: \$0.*

*IV. Request for Comments*

Comments are invited on: (a) whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information shall have practical utility; (b) the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden (including hours and cost) of the proposed collection of information; (c) ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and (d) ways to minimize the burden of the collection of information on respondents, including through the use of automated collection techniques or other forms of information technology.

Comments submitted in response to this notice will be summarized and/or included in the request for OMB approval of this information collection; they also will become a matter of public record.

**Sheleen Dumas,**

*Department PRA Clearance Officer, Office of the Chief Information Officer, Commerce Department.*

[FR Doc. 2020-09182 Filed: 4/29/2020 8:45 am; Publication Date: 4/30/2020]